

THE STATUS REPORT

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Equal Pay Day Observed April 25

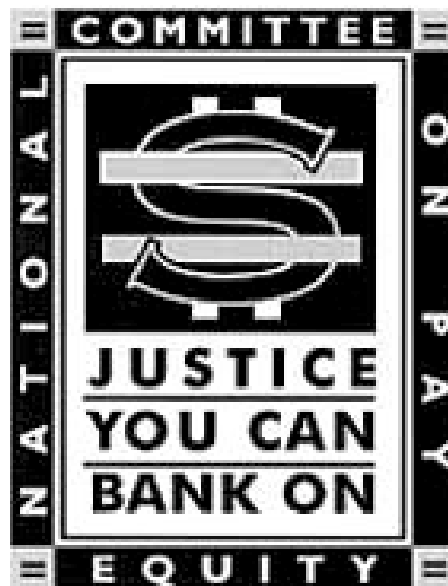
It has been against the law to pay women less than men for equal work since 1963. Yet today, more than 40 years later, women are still making only 75 percent of what their male counterparts make. And the gap shows no sign of narrowing, let alone closing.

Equal Pay Day is observed annually to demonstrate the greater length of time – between 15-16 months – that women have to work to generate the same amount of income as men in comparable positions. Thus this year women will work from January of 2005 to April 25 of 2006 to achieve the same earnings, or gender pay equity. Furthermore, this represents men working five days a week for 12 months, while women must work seven days a week for 16 months to earn equivalent wages.

Pay inequity is not limited to one career or demographic. Pay disparities affect women of all ages, races and education levels. Indeed women of color are impacted more. African American women earn 32 percent less and Latina women earn 43 percent less.

What does this really mean? And why should we care? Over the course of a working lifetime, it means between \$440,000 and \$2 million in lost income – money that is not available to women and their families.

Pay inequity is a very real threat to a woman's economic self-sufficiency. The median income of older women is almost half what it is for older men. A lifetime of lower wages means women have less income they can save for retirement. Or worse – in the case of low-income women – they may not be able to save for retirement and thus will have to work long into their senior years. Women typically outlive



For more information about pay equity issues visit

the National Committee on Pay Equity's (NCPE)

Web site: www.pay-equity.org

the American Association of University Women's

(AAUW) Web site: www.aauw.org

the Women Are Getting Even (WAGE)

Web site: www.wageproject.org

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Executive Director Corner

What will you be doing this Thursday evening? If you share our passion for seeing more women in elected office, you may be watching Commander in Chief on network television. I am pleased and excited to report that I will be in the presence of "President" Geena Davis when she headlines Middlesex Community College's Celebrity Forum in Lowell on May 4.

Much has been made of this series that portrays the first female president. Ultimately it offers a powerful role model for women, particularly young women and girls, who need to see women in positions they aspire to in order to believe their dreams are possible. One would also hope that seeing a woman as President helps to make everyone more familiar and comfortable with the possibility.

For Americans have a lot of catching up to do when it comes to women's political leadership. There may be a new woman chancellor in Germany, women presidents in Liberia and Chile, but when it comes to the United States, the only female Commander in Chief is the one Geena Davis plays on TV.

Few strides have been made since Victoria Woodhull was the first woman to run for president in 1872 before women even had the right to vote. While Congresswoman Shirley Chisolm in 1972, Senator Elizabeth Dole in 2000 and Carol Mosely Braun in 2004 all followed in her footsteps, no one has achieved the office held by Golda Meir of Israel, Indira Ghandi of India and Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain.

We need more women's voices at all our political tables – the US Congress is only 15 percent female, women in statewide elected offices hold only 25 percent of the available seats and in our state legislatures women average of 21-24 percent of House and Senate seats.

We can make a difference in these numbers. Women of all ages need role models so that they can envision themselves in the political realm. They need mentors, connections, and opportunities for hands-on experience. They need to see and truly understand the connection between government and creating change. They need to know this is an important way that they can make a difference.

In her real life, distressed with the lack of good role models for young girls on television and in movies, Davis recently founded See Jane, an organization dedicated to the promotion of gender equity in television and movie programming for children – in partnership with the nonprofit group Dads and Daughters.

Each of us – in our own way – can make a difference. Hail to the Chief!



2006 Victim Rights Conference Held April 27, 2006

Victims Rights Week 2006 was observed nationally from April 23-29, the theme of which was "Strength in Unity." The MCSW participated at the Massachusetts Victims Rights Conference, held at the State House on Thursday, April 27. The Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance (MOVA) sponsored the event and Kim Meston, a trafficking survivor and local and international human rights activist served, as the keynote speaker.

Conference highlights include MOVA honoring the contributions of eight people who have made an outstanding contribution in the victim service field and the lives of crime victims. The MCSW extends its congratulations to: District Attorney Elizabeth Scheibel, Northwest DA's Office; Tony Pellegrini, Worcester DA's Office; Lisa Lane-Vasquez, DYS Victim Service Unit; Nakisha Kemp, Dimock Community Health Center; Chairperson Maureen Walsh, MA Parole Board; Nancy Allen Scannell, MSPCC; Dennis Berounsky, Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project; and Beatrice Nessen, Garden of Peace.

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men – as result they will have to stretch their retirement savings – which are less to begin with – over a longer period of time.

And pay equity is a family issue. Nationwide working families lose \$200 billion in income annually due to the wage gap between men and women

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) has conducted research that demonstrates that the majority of Americans, 75 percent, are well aware that there is a wage gap between male and female full time workers. If this is the case, why is so little being done about it?

Former Massachusetts Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy is raising awareness around this important issue and has laid out a plan to eliminate the gender wage gap in her book, "Getting Even: Why Women Get Paid Less than Men and What to Do about It." Murphy contends that the wage gap is the result of a variety of forms of sex discrimination in the workplace, including discrimination in hiring, promotion and pay, sexual harassment, occupational segregation, bias against working mothers and other ways in which women workers and women's work is undervalued.

The heart of the Getting Even plan is this: persuading each and every CEO to close the wage gap within his or her organization. CEOs are the only ones who have the authority and power to ensure that all the women they employ are fairly paid. Female employees must show their CEOs that they need to take action. Outside pressure will help make them want to take action. Without commitment from the top, nothing will change.

Murphy's WAGE Project will focus on the Fortune 100 companies, the leaders of the American economy. These companies employ more than five million people. If the Fortune 100 companies closed the wage gap, they'd set an example for all companies. The WAGE Project will report quarterly on how gender-balanced (or far from it) are the Fortune 100's upper-level staff. They will examine whether the CEO made a commitment to pay women employees like men—and what actions they are taking. With this information, all of us will be able to assess whether these leaders care about paying women fairly and equally ... and whether we're inclined to buy their products, their services, their shares of stock.

Let's hope through Evelyn's efforts and those of others who share her passion for doing away with the wage gap that we will have better news to report next year!

Did You Know...

According to the National Mental Health Association (NMHA) more than 19 million Americans are affected each year by clinical depression. Unfortunately, fewer than half of those affected seek treatment. Left untreated, depression causes unnecessary suffering and disruption in people's lives and work, and it costs about \$44 billion a year in lost workdays.

Signs and symptoms of clinical depression include: persistent sad, anxious or empty mood; changes in sleep patterns; weight loss or gain; restlessness; irritability; persistent chronic pain or digestive disorders that do not respond to treatment; fatigue or loss of energy; feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless; thoughts of suicide or death; and difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decision.

If you experience 5 or more of these symptoms for 2 weeks or longer, you should see a doctor right away for help.



- A good work/life balance will keep you healthier and more productive in all aspects of your life.
- MIND your health! Caring for your mental health is key to your overall health.

For more information visit:

www.nmha.org

MCSW CALL TO ACTION!!

We Need Your Organization's Help!

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
announces the imminent launch of the
MASSACHUSETTS WOMEN'S RESOURCE & REFERRAL NETWORK

The network is an interactive online database that will put
information, services, agencies, and organizations
that Massachusetts women and their families need at
their fingertips!

We need your help in identifying
local service providers and women's organizations
to include in the network.

Make sure your organization is represented.

Enter your organizations information directly at
www.mass.gov/women/addmyorg.htm
or call us at 617-626-6520

Bringing Women to the Table Held May 3, 2006

The Bringing Women to the Table dinner series continued on May 3rd, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Marcellette Williams, Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and International Relations at the University of Massachusetts. Leading Massachusetts' women met at the University of Massachusetts Club in Boston for this fifth invitation-only event, which is co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators.

Lauren Stiller-Rikleen was also on hand to sign copies of her new book *Ending the Gauntlet: Removing Barriers to Women's Success in the Law*. Over 60 women attended.

MCSW Legislative Updates

On April 11th, Representative Kathy Teahan, House Co-Chair of the Women's Legislative Caucus, filed an amendment to increase the MCSW FY'07 budget by \$50,000 - from the current House level of \$198,900. This is the first time in its eight year history that the MCSW has requested a budget increase and had it not been for the fiscal crisis, the budget would have naturally risen to the requested amount (\$248,900) through inflation and cost of living increases.

At the current level of investment, the state is allocating SIX CENTS for each of the state's 3.3 million women for the Commission to study, review and report on the status of women. If our request were approved, this investment would increase to EIGHT CENTS per woman.

On April 28th, the MCSW budget amendment was adopted to be included in the House budget! Thank you to all of you who helped to make this possible. It is a tremendous step forward, but we still have many miles to go before we know what our final budget will be. You can help the MCSW by contacting your Senator and asking them to support the MCSW budget line item as included in the House budget.

MCSW Launches Statewide Network of Regional Councils

As the state agency charged with providing the permanent, effective voice for the women of Massachusetts, the MCSW must have its finger on the pulse of the status of women statewide. Thus, the MCSW has begun to establish a network of ten Regional Councils that will inform and advise the MCSW about the issues, challenges and needs that women face in their local communities, as well as provide Commissioners the opportunity to dialogue and strategize with key women leaders about how to best effect positive change for women.

The inaugural meeting of the Bristol County Regional Council convened an engaged and enthusiastic group of 25 women leaders on Wednesday, April 25, 2006 at UMass Dartmouth. Agenda items included the goals of the initiative, discussion of region specific issues, and a targeted conversation about potential collective efforts for positive change.

Once fully established, the Regional Councils will be comprised of 20-30 key women leaders from diverse professions and backgrounds. The MCSW will meet with each Council twice a year. The ten regional councils are county based: Berkshire, Bristol, Cape and Islands, Essex, Franklin-Hampshire, Hampden, Middlesex, Norfolk-Suffolk, Plymouth, and Worcester.

Short-term goals of the Regional Councils include informing the MCSW about region specific issues that affect women and girls in the Commonwealth and increasing conversation, strategic planning, and collaboration to drive change. The MCSW's long term goals for the initiative include building a statewide network of women that can be mobilized to support common goals and MCSW initiatives, supporting region specific efforts to promote the rights and advancement of women, including the establishment of local women's commissions, and developing a feeder system to identify and direct women accordingly, i.e. promote women's increased participation in seeking elected and appointed office, as well as positions of leadership.

If you have an interest in serving on one of the MCSW's Regional Councils, please contact Linda Brantley at 617-626-6520.

Commission Corner

Brookline Commission on the Status of Women Revitalized

After two years of inactivity, the Brookline Commission on the Status of Women has recently been rejuvenated. Officer Casey Hatchett of the Brookline Police Department, leads the Commission as its chair. The Commission has ten volunteer commissioners with one remaining vacancy.

The Commission organized a very successful clothing drive in January, which benefited Dress for Success, a program that helps train and outfit women returning to the workplace. Also of note, the BWC was featured on Safety Network community television. The Commission celebrated Women's History Month in March by hosting an essay contest for 5th to 8th graders, the theme of which was influential women. The contest resulted in 150 submissions and ultimately the honoring of 12 writers and the influential women about whom they wrote. Future items of interest include a pending feature on the Commission in Brookline Magazine and potential workshops on women's health.

"Most Commissions struggle with the common issues of membership, funding and finding the right people to participate who have the time to commit to the organization," said Linda Brantley, ED of the MCSW. "We are so pleased that the BCSW has stuck with the challenges it faced and come out the other side stronger than ever. We hope that their perseverance and the success they are enjoying will serve as a helpful model to other local Commissions in Massachusetts."

Anyone wishing to become involved with the BCSW should contact Casey Hatchett via e-mail: casey_hatchett@town.brookline.ma.us

Congratulations to Commissioner Roseanna Means, MD of Wellesley!

Commissioner Roseanna Means, MD will be one of seven Exceptional Women honored on May 5th at the 9th Annual MAGIC 106.7 Exceptional Women Awards luncheon. Event organizers qualify exceptional women as those who overcome obstacles to achieve greatness in their lives and serve as shining stars and role models for us all.

Commissioner Means is a wife, mother, physician, mentor, cancer survivor, and tireless advocate for the rights of homeless women everywhere. She is the founder of Women of Means, a non-profit organization devoted to improving the lives of women who are homeless or marginally housed through quality health care, education and advocacy. She is a graduate of MIT and Tufts Medical School.



To learn more about Dr. Means and the wonderful work she does, please visit her Web site at www.womenofmeans.org.

The MCSW is tremendously proud of, and congratulates, Commissioner Means! Well Done!

"Action is the antidote to despair."

~ Joan Baez

Upcoming Noteworthy Events & Happenings

⇒ May 5, Noon-2:00 p.m. **9th Annual MAGIC 106.7 Exceptional Women Awards**

To be held at the Westin Copley Place, Boston – 7 Exceptional Women, including MCSW Commissioner Dr. Roseanna Means, will be honored. For more information Call 617-822-6534 or log onto www.magic1067.com.

⇒ May 24, 4:00-6:00 p.m. **MCSW Monthly Full Commission Meeting**

To be held at 19 Staniford St., 3rd FL conference Rm. 307C, Boston, MA.

To RSVP, or for more information, call the Commission office at 617-626-6520

For a complete listing of events please visit www.mass.gov/women/upcoming.htm



If you have an event that you would like added to our future newsletters, or Web site, please e-mail the information to:
Paula.Daddona@state.ma.us

Commission Officers & Members FY 2006

Kathleen Casavant, Chair, Chelsea

Linda Cavaoli, Worcester

Martha Chadwick, Boston

Gloria Coney, Roxbury

Lianne Cook, Salem

Helen Corbett, Danvers

Donna Finneran, Mattapan

Marianne Fleckner, Westford

Mary Grant, PhD, North Adams

Catherine Greene, Esq., Secretary, Brighton

Elizabeth Houlihan, Vice-Chair, Falmouth

Helen Jackson, MD, W. Roxbury

Judith Kurland, Brookline

Roseanna Means, MD, Wellesley

Angela Menino, Hyde Park

Carol Pimentel, New Bedford

Susana Segat, Cambridge

Greer Tan Swiston, Treasurer, Newton

Commission Staff & Interns

Linda Brantley, Executive Director

Paula Daddona, Program Manager

Jill Ashton, Outreach Coordinator

Darlene Kelter, Administrative Assistant

Interns:

Alexis Del Viscio

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

VISIT US AT:

WWW.MASS.GOV/WOMEN

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**Do you have questions or comments about this newsletter? If so, please contact
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